There was no point in taking her father's clothes with her. She therefore asked the chambermaid to accept them and get what she could for them. The maid burst into a flood of Italian as she expressed her gratitude. It was this that made Luella remember that Signor Vecchio was not aware that she spoke Italian. He had very carefully spoken to her all the time they had been together in English. Again for no reason she could think of, it seemed wrong that she wished to keep the fact of her knowledge of Italian a secret from him.

Her luggage was ready to be carried downstairs. She suddenly thought that the little boy, Enrico, would only be able to speak Italian. She went down the stairs followed by a maid carrying her bags.

Signor Vecchio was there waiting for her, and she said: "I have been thinking, Signor, that the little boy will . . speak only . . Italian."

"That is where you are wrong," Signor Vecchio replied. "Enrico has been taking English lessons for two months." He saw the look of surprise on Luella's face and said: "I arranged it because as soon as I knew that Tia could not recover and would die, I decided that her son must go to his father."

"So he has been learning to speak English," Luella murmured.

"You must speak English all the way on the journey," Signor Vecchio said in a commanding tone. "It is very important that his father should not think of him as Italian, when he is half English and has an English title."

"I will do that," Luella agreed.

"Enrico is the Marquess of Gates, and the family name is Stone," the Signor added.

While they were talking Luella's luggage was being put on the carriage. The Signor took her down the passageway and helped her inside. He then got in himself and as they drove off she asked him: "Where was the Duke married? Was it in the Cathedral?"

"Yes, of course," the Signor replied. "It was a quiet wedding, but it gave me great pleasure to see two people so much in love with each other."

Luella thought they might have been like the young bride and bridegroom she had watched earlier in the day being married. Then she remembered that when speaking of divorce the Signor had said that Tia was a Catholic, so presumably the Duke was not a Catholic and it would have been a very short service.

It only took a short time for them to reach another street in which there were some poor-looking houses. The carriage stopped outside one and the Signor said: "There is no need for you to get out. I will collect Enrico and take you both to an hotel near the station, where you can rest until the train is due."

Luella did not say anything and he quickly climbed out of the carriage. She had the feeling that he had no wish for her to go into the dingy-looking house. It seemed to her strange. If the child's mother, Tia, had been such a social success as the Signor implied, why should she have lived with her son in such a sordid neighbourhood?

The Signor was not as long as she expected. He came out quite soon holding the hand of a small boy. When Luella saw him she thought he was attractive.